

therefore, be best followed in a tortuous course and into the crevices; but one must not use too much of this mixture for fear of the water becoming absorbed and leaving the bismuth in hard masses.

For general use and for further distention of the stomach I have found a mixture of bismuth and kephir (or yolak), previously described,⁵ to be most serviceable, since it keeps the bismuth in almost perfect suspension and is easily digested.

The remainder of the technic, with regard to the management of the tube, the apparatus, the dress of the patient, the patient, and the plates, will be similar to that used in other abdominal examinations.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Gastric carcinoma is demonstrable when it changes the course of the food through the stomach, when it decreases the volume, interferes with peristaltic action, fixes or displaces the stomach, causes an indentation in the stomach wall, or modifies the rate of evacuation of the gastric contents.

2. I believe that with this aid a diagnosis can be made earlier than has heretofore been possible.

3. As a rule it is a tedious and expensive study, and therefore each case should be studied well first clinically.

4. Great caution and thoroughness will have to be observed, or errors will be made, and this valuable method of investigation will fall into discredit.

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A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF QUACKERY

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We are likely to think that quackery is comparatively new, or at least fostered by popular education, and that unscrupulous struggle for success which is sometimes considered a characteristic of our times. I have been rather interested, however, in tracing out a series of chapters in the history of quackery which show that the methods, the ways, the motives and the character of the quack have been about the same from time immemorial, in all countries of the world. We might think, for instance, that the quack of the occident would be quite different from the quack of the orient; but much evidence—among other things, a little story in the Arabian Nights—shows how many of the characteristics of the quack persist to the farthest limits of space and time.

The Arabian Nights themselves—that is, the series of stories which we know by that name—were given a definite collective form (probably by a single writer) at some time during the fifteenth century. However that may be, the individual tales are undoubtedly of unknown antiquity and derived from widely scattered sources. Variants are found in the folklore of Egypt, Syria, the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, Persia, India and even distant China and the remote center of Africa. One of them, the story of the clever thief, was retold by Herodotus nearly 500 years before Christ; and he knew that it was old in his time. It may be that some of these stories represent the oldest tales that mankind has, and that many of them come

from that central plateau of Asia where very probably the human race originated. It is all the more interesting then to find among them the following characteristic story of a quack with all the traits that we know so well to-day.

THE WEAVER WHO BECAME A LEECH

Once upon a time there was a man in Persia who wedded a woman of rank higher than himself and nobler of lineage, who had no guardian to preserve her from want. She was very loath to marry one who was beneath her; yet she wed him because of need, and took of him a bond in writing to the effect that he would ever be under her order to bid and forbid and would never thwart her in word or in deed. Now the man was a weaver and he bound himself in writing to pay his wife ten thousand dirhams in case of default. After such fashion they abode a long while till one day the wife went out to fetch water and saw a leech who had spread a carpet hard by the road, whereon he had set out great store of simples and implements of medicine and he was speaking and muttering charms, while the folk flocked to him from all quarters and girt him about on every side.

The weaver's wife marveled at the largeness of the physician's fortune and said in herself, "Were my husband such a one he would lead an easy life and that wherein we are of straightness and poverty would be widened to him."

When she went home she said to her husband, "Verily my breast is narrowed by reason of thee and of the very goodness of thine intent; narrow means suit me not, and thou in thy present craft gainest naught; so either do thou seek out a business other than this or pay me my rightful due and let me wend my ways."

Her husband chid her for this and advised her to take patience; but she would not be turned from her design and said to him, "Go forth and watch yonder physician how he doth and learn from him what he saith." Said he, "Let not thy heart be troubled; I will go every day to the session of the leech."

So he began resorting daily to the physician and committing to memory his answers and his jargon.

Then he returned to his wife and said to her, "I have stored up the physician's sayings in memory and have mastered his manner of muttering and diagnoses and prescribing remedies, and I wot by heart the names of the medicines and of all the diseases, and there abideth of thy bidding naught undone; so what dost thou command me now to do?"

Quoth she, "Leave the loom and open thyself a leech's shop."

"But," quoth he, "my fellow-townsmen know me and this affair will not profit me, save in a land of strangerhood; so come, let us go out from this city and get us to a foreign land and there live."

And she said, "Do whatso thou wilt."

Accordingly, he arose and taking his weaving gear sold it and bought with the price drugs and simples and wrought himself a carpet with which they set out and journeyed to a village, where they took up their abode. Then the man fell to going round about the hamlets and villages and outskirts of towns, after donning leech's dress, and he began to make much gain. Their affairs prospered and their circumstances bettered; wherefore they praised Allah for their present ease. In this way they lived and wandered from country to country, sojourning for awhile in one town and another, till

5. Physiologic and Clinical Observations of the Alimentary Canal by Means of the Roentgen Rays, THE JOURNAL A. M. A., Dec. 21, 1907, XLIX, 2069.

they came to the land of the Romans and alighted down in the city thereof wherein was Galen the wise physician; but the weaver knew him not. So he fared forth, as was his wont, in quest of a place where the folk might be gathered together, and hired the courtyard of Galen himself. There he laid his carpet, and spreading out on it his simples and instruments of medicine, praised himself and his skill and claimed a cleverness such as none but he might claim.

Galen heard that which he affirmed of his understanding, and it was certified unto him and established in his mind that the man was a skilled leech of the leeches of the Persians, and he said in himself, "Unless he had confidence in his knowledge and were minded to confront me and contend with me, he had not sought the very door of my house, neither had he spoken that which he hath spoken."

And care and doubt got hold on Galen; so he drew near the weaver and addressed himself to see how his doings should end, while the folk began to flock to him and describe to him their ailments, and he would answer them thereof, hitting the mark one while and missing it another while, so that naught appeared to Galen of his fashion whereby his mind might be assured that he had justly estimated his skill.

Presently up came a woman, and when the weaver saw her afar off he said to her, "Is not your husband a Jew and is not his ailment flatulence?" "Yes," replied the woman, and the folk marveled at this; wherefore the man was magnified in the eyes of Galen, for that he heard speech such as was not of usage of doctors.

Then the woman asked, "What is the remedy?" and the weaver answered, "Bring the honorarium."

So she paid him a dirham and he gave her medicines contrary to that ailment and such as would only aggravate the complaint. When Galen saw what appeared to him proof of the man's incapacity he turned to his disciples and pupils and bade them fetch the mock doctor, with all his gear and rugs; and accordingly they brought him without stay or delay. When Galen saw the weaver he asked, "What drove thee to do that which thou dost?"

So the weaver acquainted the wise Galen with his adventure, especially with the marriage settlement, and the obligation by which he was bound with regard to his wife, whereat the sage marveled.

Then he entreated the weaver with kindness and took him apart and said to him, "Expound to me whence thou knewest that the woman was from a man, and he a stranger and Jew, and that his ailment was flatulence?"

The weaver replied, "'Tis well. Thou must know that we people of Persia are skilled in physiognomy, and I saw the woman to be rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed and tall-statured. These qualities belong not to the woman of Rome; moreover, I saw her burning with anxiety, so I knew that the patient was her husband. As for his strangerhood, I noted that the dress of the woman differed from that of the townfolk, wherefore I knew that she was a foreigner; and in her hand I saw a yellow rag, which garred me wot that the sick man was a Jew and she a Jewess. Moreover, she came to me on First Day; and 'tis the Jew's custom to take meat puddings and food that hath passed the night and eat them on the Saturday, their Sabbath, hot and cold, and they exceed in eating; wherefore flatulence and

indigestion betide them. Thus I was directed and guessed that which thou hast heard."

Now when Galen heard this he ordered that the weaver be given the amount of his wife's dowry and bade pay it to her and said to him, "Divorce her."

Furthermore, he forbade him from returning to the practice of physic and warned him never again to take to wife a woman of rank higher than his own; and he gave him his spending money and charged him to return to his proper craft.

HAEC FABULA DOCET

We have here the eternal underlying factor in the success of the quack: his readiness to promise absolutely to cure anything and everything. His apparent self-confidence is so unbounded that even the skilled physician begins to wonder whether the quack has not some secrets not possessed by the profession. When the physician gets a little closer to the quack, however, he finds that the main elements in the latter's success, besides his confidence-inspiring boasts, are his knowledge of human nature and his skill in playing on foibles and credulity. As a rule the medicines he gives, like those of the weaver-leech, are such as do harm rather than good, but yet is the quack in honor and the money he makes is far beyond the amount earned by the regular physician. The real motive for the leech's change of occupation is similar to that of the quack to-day: that he may have a more dignified occupation, make more money and live up to his wife's idea of social station. Galen's method of managing the quack is that which we have found necessary in modern times. We have had to investigate the methods of the quacks and their supposed new discoveries and then we have had to arrange that they should no longer be allowed to exploit the public.

The whole story is as true to human nature in the twentieth century as it was in the fifteenth, or perhaps in the fifth century B. C., when Herodotus may have heard during his travels a version of it with some fore-runner of Galen as the learned physician in the case. Men do not differ much in essentials from age to age; and the history of quackery has many other chapters like this that show how enduring are the best and worst in human nature, and how superficial the changes produced by environment.

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THE TREATMENT OF FRACTURES; SOME PRACTICAL POINTS *

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The most important step in the treatment of fractures is that the surgeon shall have made a diagnosis of the condition which he is about to treat. To undertake the treatment without an adequate picture in one's mind of the bony lesion present detracts materially from the satisfaction in one's work and conduces sometimes to poor results, on the one hand, or to unnecessary confinement of the patient, on the other. So important is this that when the surgeon is not able to satisfy himself as to the full character of the injury by means of

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